

discussed by the General Committee and these cases invariably appear as Staff Committee papers.

The Library advises all staff of the University by individual memoranda of significant developments, such as its online catalogue being available by network from their offices, and advises all Heads of Department outside the Library and Library Liaison Officers of matters such as standing orders and periodicals cancellation exercises by memorandum also.

Many senior Library staff are members of committees, Faculties, Divisional Boards etc. in the University where they are able to contribute to a better informed perspective on the operation of the Library, through discussing matters which may impinge directly (or only slightly) upon the Library or where they can make those present aware of the Library's contribution to the wider "management" of the University as a whole.

There is no super-imposed house style on the method of communicating and presentation around the system although the University of Otago has adopted a house style for the printing of all official publications which the Library will conform to. There is an in-house Library ruling that all mail is to be acknowledged, at the very least, within two weeks, even if a later follow-up to provide the required information is necessary.

#### **External less formal communication**

Casual contacts between Library staff and academic and student passers-by are of a high order for the very most part. Any problems are usually discussed on the spot amicably and helpfully, usually ensuring resolutions which are satisfactory to both the user and the Library. The skill of the Library's staff in such pleasant and helpful interchanges is evidenced by the very low level of formal written or telephoned complaints or problems which

reach the University Librarian. The emphasis in the Library's Mission Statement on providing services in a courteous, helpful and professionally skilled manner is of real significance.

The Library runs a fairly regular and frequent column in the University Newsletter giving news of new developments and exhibitions, notable acquisitions and occasional notes on staff. Notices, interviews and articles about current issues or exhibitions are also provided to local media.

Each of the branches receives informally written suggestions, praise and criticism from members of the student body and these are responded to fairly informally in writing by the appropriate Branch Librarian or, in the case of the Central Library, by the Circulation Librarian, most often, or the Reference Librarian.

#### **Summary**

I believe that at Otago the formal communications "structure" is very well set-up and maintained. The staff Committee is the key organ of a fairly vital network. Library staff are very well informed about the progress in the Library's developments and about policy and resourcing matters. In current jargon, there is a large degree of transparency about the position of the Library at any one time, and in the Corporate Plan there is a reasonably drawn blue-print for developments over the next few years. The Library is well placed in the University to have its voice heard and for its advocates to go in and bat for it. I suspect that the informal networking is akin to that of most large and decentralised organisations, except that through the Library's committee and the accompanying consultation process there are plenty of opportunities for liaison, consultation and joint problem-sharing in fora which may be more or less formal.

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## ADOPTING A BICULTURAL STANCE OVER REFERENCE SERVICES IN NEW ZEALAND LIBRARIES.

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#### **Introduction**

This paper looks at some ways in which New Zealand libraries currently provide a reference service to Maori people and suggests some areas in which this service may be enhanced. A definition of reference service is discussed and then applied to specific aspects of reference service in relation to the bicultural situation that exists between the Pakeha (non-Maori New Zealanders) and the Maori. Due to the lack of documented information on this subject,

many of the comments and observations are my own interpretations of the current situation, which were reached after discussions with librarians who are working in the reference field.

In researching this work I have started from several assumptions, in order to avoid becoming overburdened by issues which have already been discussed extensively and which are beyond the range of this topic. These assumptions are:



- 1 That as a result of the following three points, Maori are entitled to a library service that meets their needs:
  - i Article 3 of the Treaty of Waitangi, which states that Maori will have the same rights and duties of citizenship as the people of England.
  - ii The right of Maori as ratepayers or members of the community that the libraries are intended to serve.
  - iii The widely accepted philosophy of library service which is that it should aim to be apolitical, non-biased and non-racist.
- 2 That, in general, reference services to Pakeha are adequate in most libraries and that quality of reference service, as a whole, is not the issue of this paper.
- 3 That in many libraries, attempts to help Maori users feel welcome, and to acknowledge and adapt library services to cater to the needs of Maori, have not always been made or have not always been successful.

### Reference Services

In *Introduction to Reference Services* by William Katz, the author lists some of the indirect services a reference librarian may be expected to perform. In his view "reference service includes the behind-the-scenes activities of the reference library in the selection, acquisition and maintenance of library stock and its careful recording and administration."<sup>1</sup> Donald Davinson expounds a similar view in his book, *Reference Service*, where he says "Reference librarianship is also about the maintenance of resource banks from which answers to questions are provided and materials needed by users are made available."<sup>2</sup> So providing a good reference service should start before the librarian and the user meet face to face, it should start with ensuring that the reference facilities of the library are capable of meeting the needs of the library users. If a library wishes to adopt a bicultural stance towards its reference services, this attitude should permeate throughout the entire reference system; bilingual signs and Maori staff members, while steps in the right direction, are not sufficient. That reference service is about understanding cannot be disputed. Numerous authors, including Katz, Hutchins and Davinson have written texts on 'the reference question', and the librarian's communication skills, all of which are significant factors in providing a successful reference service. Adopting a bicultural stance to reference service will require that the libraries and librarians understand the Maori people who will be asking for reference information, not just their language, but their information needs, their way of expressing their needs and the way in which they would like their needs to be met. This understanding can then be used to:

- 1 Make the library a more inviting and hospitable environment, so that Maori will feel that it is a place where they are welcome, and will want to come and use its facilities.
- 2 Provide the type of material that will be useful to, and wanted by, Maori library users.
- 3 Create a system whereby material of likely interest to Maori can be located within the library collection.
- 4 Provide staff who are able to communicate with Maori, in order to identify their questions and information needs.
- 5 Look for new areas where library reference services may be useful.

### 1 Environment

Stephen Murphy has written several excellent articles on how to make the library more inviting and comfortable for Maori. His methods include the establishment of special collections of books on Maoritanga, the use of bilingual signs and Maori craft such as tuku-tuku panels, and involvement of local Maori communities, both in the redecorating of the library and, as at Paraparaumu Public Library, in holding a special hui to draw attention to the changes. Another aspect of particular relevance to reference services which some librarians have mentioned to me, is the desirability of a room or working space where Maori can work together. The quiet and restrained atmosphere which prevails in most libraries is alien to many non-Maori as well as to Maori. When researching information Maori often prefer to work together in a group, talking, discussing and enjoying each other's company while working on their subject. This has become more common as Maori are involved in researching material connected with Treaty of Waitangi issues. Several generations may come to research together, with the older people providing the background knowledge and the younger providing the technical knowledge on where to find the information or how to present it.

This space could also, if suitably designed, fill another need for Maori users - that of privacy. Sharon Dell wrote of

"the spiritual nature of knowledge and power inherent in the spoken and written words [which] is very real to a Maori reader"<sup>3</sup>

who may desire privacy in which to pray to, or speak aloud to, a document. A space set aside for their use would demonstrate to Maori that the library is aware of their cultural and social needs, and that it is willing to make an effort to satisfy these needs.

The spiritual or cultural significance of some Maori material also makes the location of some of the reference material important. It may not be acceptable to keep certain documents containing sacred material, such as ritual chants and genealogy, in the same folder as ordinary documents. Librarians should try to become aware of, and sensitive to, such aspects of their reference collections and endeavour to present their collections in a way that is respectful of the mana of the material, in order to show consideration towards the Maori library users.

### 2 Material

Establishment of a separate, easily identifiable, Maoritanga section may be the first step in providing reference material of particular use to Maori. This could include such areas as history, biography, economics, culture, pre-European ways of life, handicrafts and traditional arts, and a collection of Maori language books.

With the growing awareness of Maoridom, especially over the last few years, which is possibly due in part to the issues of the Treaty of Waitangi, an increasing number of books which address both historical and contemporary aspects of Maoridom and the treaty have started to appear. An effort should be made to include as many of these as possible, to help make the collection relevant to the issues and interests of the contemporary Maori.

Creating a separate Maoritanga section, rather than scattering items throughout the main collection, will have the advantage of making the material easily identifiable and it will be easier to find items on related topics; it will



also help to ensure that the material is treated with respect for its mana.

A subject area of great interest to both Pakeha and Maori is genealogy (whakapapa). While Pakeha are well catered for by the written records of shipping indexes, early settlers' rolls, churches and registries, Maori often have to rely on their oral tradition and less formal records for such information. The genealogy section of Porirua Public Library, combined with its Maoritanga collection, is heavily used by Maori researching tribal origins and histories and this is an area of interest that other libraries may wish to expand or cater to.

The recently increased numbers of both Maori and Pakeha who are learning Maori language and pronunciation, and its inclusion in some school curriculae has created a need for books in and on the language. These should cater to all age groups, Te Kohanga Reo creating an incentive to produce and acquire books for even the earliest level of users. One of the current problems is that not enough material exists in Maori to satisfy an avid reader, but as wide and large a selection as possible would be desirable.

Having an oral tradition, many aspects of Maori culture are ideally suited to audio visual material and this medium should not be overlooked when assembling the collection, as it would be a valuable source of cultural reference material. Rangitunoa Black suggests that libraries can take an active role by actually undertaking to have some of the Maori stories in manuscripts produced on tape, with recorded music or appropriate soundtracks, which could then be made accessible to the Maori public.<sup>4</sup> She also suggests that the waiata (chants and songs), many of which were collected from people taken prisoner during the Waikato wars, be treated in a similar manner, giving them a rangi or tune, thus creating an oral history tool and increasing the use and awareness of the waiata. At the same time this would provide Maori with their information and history in a format which they may prefer.

The non-Maori needs of Maori people within the community should also be catered for within the main library collection. If there is a particular local industry, interest or pastime, such as sports, whitebaiting, hunting, or for example the bone carving school at Porirua (students often come to the library to seek motifs and designs), then books in those subjects should be included in the libraries that serve those communities. Wharehuia Hemera suggests some more practical subjects such as

"how to fill out an IR12 or UB form, how to fix a clapped out Ford V8, the best way to skin and cook a wild boar or how to stretch a low wage from one pay day to the next"<sup>5</sup>

and if this is the information that members of the library's community need, then this is what the library should be able to provide access to.

Vertical files are an area that would be particularly suited to providing material of relevance to Maori, the current concern for the issue of Maori health being one example of subject need that could be met by this format. Literature on smoking, asthma, hepatitis, nutrition, child nutrition and heart disease could be included. The file need not necessarily be strictly on aspects of Maori health, but on health in general, including aspects which are relevant to Maori.

An information and referral service (I & R), listing

local contact addresses and community information could be incorporated into an existing I & R service. Rather than concentrating on services that are met within the Maori community, that users are probably already aware of through their contact with their community, it could aim to provide information about services available within the public sector.

### 3 Access to Information

#### *Current Projects*

Having provided a selection of material that Maori will wish to use, it is vital that the information they want should be accessible from this resource. The methods and tools for accessing Maori information which are currently available were considered largely inadequate by the reference librarians I have spoken to. Some steps are being taken to change this, for example:

- 1 A Maori Subject Heading Thesaurus is being compiled which, once complete "will allow Maori researchers to access Maori information in a Maori way."<sup>6</sup>
- 2 A 1990 project to create a bibliography of Maori newspapers has been proposed. This is necessary because, although the 1987 Union List of New Zealand Newspapers included a comment stating that it included all the newspapers published in New Zealand from 1840 to the end of 1986, it contained no reference to Maori newspapers, and did not even include them in the list of newspapers not included.
- 3 A Maori staff member has been appointed to SATIS and it is hoped that this person will be able to combine cultural awareness with particular knowledge of information and business research to provide a service to iwi based small business and small industries. In this way SATIS may assist and promote the development of self-sufficient and profitable business within a Maori cultural context. This is a timely development as the new government sponsored Business Development Programme has several programmes, such as the Mana Enterprises Scheme and the Maori Business Technology Scheme, which are specifically designed to encourage Maori business enterprises.
- 4 *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (DNZB) has recently been published in English and a Maori edition is underway. The DNZB has a tribal and hapu index in the English version, and the Maori version will probably have entries arranged alphabetically in tribal clusters to reflect a Maori way of relating subjects. Unfortunately, the Maori edition will only contain those entries which are about Maori people - if a Maori wants to read about Pakeha, they will have to read in English or not at all. This does not seem to comply with the concept of "equal partnership"; as Ranginui Walker said, "the Maori has only recently realised that research is to some extent a predatory activity which contradicts their own value system as expressed in the following aphorism... An offering from you, an offering from me and we will fill the basket."<sup>7</sup> Maori have given the history of their ancestors to the Pakeha, but Pakeha have not given the history of their ancestors to Maori.
- 5 The National Library's project Te Putea Korero is currently involved in recataloguing, indexing and microficheing all printed Maori works to 1960.



### Possible projects.

There are other areas where a bicultural approach could enhance the access to collections of Maori material in libraries:

- 1 In her article, *The Maori Book or the book in Maori*, Sharon Dell said "an indexing project is necessary to make the contents of the Maori language periodicals more accessible."<sup>8</sup>  
In fact, all of the reference librarians I spoke to expressed a desire to index their entire collection of Maori material, as the current methods of access are inadequate. Technology may provide a solution to this problem, as the index and contents pages of each item could be scanned and entered directly into a computer database. Users would then be able to access their subject using any keyword which may be related to it. This method would only be as good as the index pages of books, but it would be a useful interim measure until the Maori Thesaurus and the time consuming job of re-cataloguing is completed. It would also provide an alternative means of accessing material if the catalogue failed to produce a required item.
- 2 Technology could also play an important role in the suggestion by Rangitunoa Black that a national database be established as a comprehensive source of whakapapa (genealogy). This would include the task of contacting people who hold whakapapa in their personal collections, so that all available resources are documented and can be located or accessed through a central pool of information.
- 3 Rangitunoa Black suggests an extensive copying programme to provide facsimiles of original documents including the White papers, Maori Letters, and the Maori Land Court Minute Books. By doing this, Maori would be able to see and touch items which are normally kept in the Rare Books room or which have restricted access. Rangitunoa Black thinks this is important because  
"when you hide information from people, when you keep it from them you are actually denying the culture, denying their rights to their history and their past."<sup>9</sup>
- 4 When writing about library services to the disadvantaged, Katz said  
"Along with the addition of specialised materials, the reference librarian should make every effort to compile bibliographies, research lists, and other aids to assist the minority person"<sup>10</sup>  
Creating indexes and bibliographies, not only of Maori material but of general material which is of interest to Maori people would help reference librarians in their role as intermediaries between the user and the information. Co-operation with Maori would be needed when doing this, to ensure that material was grouped or indexed in a way that would bridge the gap between the Maori way of expressing needs and grouping thoughts, and the traditional library methods. This bicultural approach to access should apply to all library facilities wherever possible. Once again, by using computers, technology would provide an easier way of cross-referencing from places and headings where the library traditionally keeps such information. Libraries may even benefit from looking at themselves and their methods from a different viewpoint.

### 4 Communication

Davinson says of reference service, "at the heart of all reference work is the actual contact between the librarian and the library user, when the user attempts to articulate his needs and the librarian tries to understand them."<sup>11</sup>

Understanding a library user's reference question is not a problem peculiar to a bicultural situation. Perhaps one of the first steps would be to improve the library staff's communication skills with all users. As Davinson points out

"That so many major public service organisations find it necessary to train their staff in communications shows how puzzling it is that so little has been done by most libraries and librarians to ensure that their staffs are carefully trained in user relationships."<sup>12</sup>

Whether this is the responsibility of the employing library or of the library training schools is debatable, but it is essential that these skills be acquired. Currently, far more emphasis is placed on the technical skills, which although they are an equal ingredient in the skills of the reference librarian, are to no avail if they are not complemented by the librarian's ability to communicate. Helping the readers to articulate their needs is something the library has less influence over - perhaps this would best be commenced at school level, in fact, an ability to communicate one's thoughts should be one of the priorities of schooling, but unfortunately school curriculums are largely beyond the control of libraries.

Adding a bicultural dimension to an already difficult situation may not be totally disadvantageous. Both parties, knowing the additional barrier to understanding, may try harder than in a monocultural situation. However, some things could help make the communication process easier and these are concerned with the librarian and their skills.

- 1 The most obvious and most discussed way of communicating with Maori and encouraging their use of libraries is to have more Maori librarians. In his paper titled *Librarianship and the Maori Community*, Wharehuia Hemera said "Maori staff are essential if librarians are going to cater to the Maori public. I have noticed through my own experience the sheer relief that a Maori user shows when he or she discovers they are to be served by a Maori member of staff. They become confidential, articulate, enjoy themselves and they do come back."<sup>13</sup>

Various schemes and ideas have been proposed as to how an increased number of Maori librarians may be achieved. These include the offer of scholarships for Maori wanting to become librarians, the mandatory inclusion of a given percentage of Maoris in each library course, dropping the prerequisite of a degree for the Diploma in Librarianship where equivalent skills and training in other fields would be a substitute, and a variety of ways of combining short intensive courses with full or part-time study. Whichever scheme is used, the importance of training should be emphasised, as some libraries have already found that encountering an unhelpful or unskilled librarian, no matter what their race, will not give any library user encouragement to return.

- 2 A knowledge of the Maori language would obviously be the greatest asset, as Katz wrote in *Reference Services*:

"If a special language is called for, there should be someone who is conversant with that language - not



only to assist the users but also to purchase and interpret materials".<sup>14</sup>

Auckland Public Library has appointed a Maori Language Specialist librarian, currently Rangitunoa Black, whose task it is to provide such a service.

If this is not possible, a familiarity with the pronunciation, the more common terms, names of local tribes and spelling of common words would be desirable. It is encouraging to see that some Maori Cultural Awareness Training courses for librarians are being held, although unfortunate that in some cases libraries are sending junior staff in preference to senior staff.<sup>15</sup> These courses can provide an insight into some aspects of non-verbal communication which differ from those of non-Maori people and can also increase the librarian's familiarity with Maori protocol and terminology.

- 3 Another way of becoming familiar with Maori culture would be to establish communications with a local marae, so that library staff could visit the marae and experience Maori culture and Maori language first-hand.

"The reference librarian should either master the background necessary to serve minority groups, or what is more likely, be able to call upon community experts (from social workers to better-educated members of the minority groups) for assistance and advice."<sup>16</sup>

- 4 Some insight into verbal and non-verbal communication, both in a bicultural and multicultural situation is given in the book "Talking Past Each Other" by Joan Metge and Patricia Kinloch. It also contains very useful information on the difference in ways of expressing and answering questions, for example

"A Pakeha would say: 'No, I don't want that', 'No, I don't want to lose my coat'..., where Maori and Samoans would say: 'Yes, I don't want that', 'Yes, I don't want to lose my coat'..."<sup>17</sup>

In dealing with reference questions the librarian would need to be aware of this difference in order to make any progress towards understanding the question. Of course there is also the added complication that some Maori will also be aware of these differences and compensate for them in their conversation. One can imagine in an extreme situation, a scenario where both sides in an effort to understand each other, actually reverse roles!

On a positive note, discussions with two reference librarians providing services to Maori communities raised the point that in some cases the non-Maori librarian may be sought out specifically because they are non-Maori. This occurred when Maori were researching sensitive issues such as the tribal history of other tribes. In these cases the librarian was seen as a neutral intermediary and their 'foreignness' was an advantage.

### 5 Future Directions

An aspect that so far seems to have been neglected are services to Maori who have only one language - English. In their efforts to cater to the Maori speaking library users, libraries must avoid cutting off non-Maori speakers from their heritage, by ensuring, where possible, that the collections contain material written for and by Maori in English.

Libraries must be wary when adopting a bicultural stance not to forget that it is Bicultural, particularly as there are currently so few Maori librarians to voice the Maori

point of view. Jane McRae said

"we have been holding views on biculturalism and attempting to put them into practice on our own, constructing theories about what is appropriate and failing to consult with those whom the theory is about, as to whether it is acceptable."<sup>18</sup>

Hopefully the NZLA Biculturalism Committee will ensure that a more cooperative attitude, particularly at a national level, permeates any future projects.

One of the dangers that was brought to my attention is that of approaching the reference needs of Maori people and Maori collections in a piecemeal manner. As Rangitunoa Black commented

"everyone's shooting off in their own directions."<sup>19</sup>

What is needed is an overall concept of what services should and need to be provided, then a plan of how these should be established, both at a local and national level. This will only be attained by close cooperation and liaison between libraries, Maori and librarians.

Where to go after appointing and training Maori staff is not frequently discussed, but in relation to providing a reference service, giving Maori librarians some degree of autonomy so that they can make decisions on behalf of Maori library users would be one possibility. Wharehuia Hemara suggests that Maori librarians should be given

"authority to liaise between institutes and iwi and develop collections and access to them in a way that an informed Maori community see fit."<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps all New Zealanders will benefit from some of these changes, as many of them are simply aimed at giving the library a more human face.

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# “HELL HOUND ON MY TRAIL”: ETHICS AND LIBRARIANSHIP

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You may be wondering at once what Robert Johnson is doing in an article about librarianship. (And indeed, you may be wondering who Robert Johnson actually was... Well, dear reader, that's another story, for another place. Briefly, he is the Godfather of the blues, and the source of endless truisms).

'I got to keep movin', I got to keep movin'... there's a hell hound on my trail'. I won't pretend that I woke up at nights worrying about libraries and ethics, but a while ago I realized that ethics - whatever they were - were bubbling through the thought I was giving to the Reference Interview. That pivotal point of reference work has always been an obsession for me (having worked in various Reference jobs), and is an area I teach in at The School of Library Studies. The more I fragmented the Reference Interview into its dynamics, and the more specific I became over its elements, the more I ran into what I could only describe as ethical areas.

At this point I jumped from Reference (though I will return to that later) to a wider perspective, encouraged by some recent articles in *Management* by Ian F. Grant. Grant has been looking at how business in New Zealand has - or hasn't - adopted an ethical stance. What intrigued me was that where business people have decided to set clear

ethical standards, they have been very detailed in their identification of what the bottom lines were, so that there was little ambiguity. (And equally, where bottom lines have not been set, people have adapted their behaviour down, with profit, personal or corporate, ruling). What was just as intriguing was Mr. Grant's comments<sup>1</sup> that even where standards are codified, they are not necessarily observed: "The legal and accounting professions appear committed to ethical standards. Both produce regularly updated codes of conduct. Qualifying lawyers and accountants must attend special courses on the subject. Yet there is a growing acceptance of behaviour that would once have been inexcusable". (p.79)

And it was an easy jump from this to librarians and ethics. Do we all mean the same thing by the term, or are our reactions instinctual and automatic? Do we have an ethical touchstone, or is it a case of 'that's ethics because it feels like it'. And if we have only a hazy view of ethics, are we at risk of accepting, in Mr. Grant's phrase, inexcusable behaviour? And could what we might think of as ethics be equally referred to as values, or fairness, or good practice, or accountability, or professionalism, or.....?

The hell hound was on my trail.

I was curious now, about a number of things.